

Notes from 9-26-03 meeting:

A. Desired Outcomes identified:

1. Zoning that allows cluster housing, which includes a variety of housing types and income levels.
2. Great American Neighborhoods that include affordable housing.
3. Acceptability by towns of affordable housing.
4. More people to focus on the need for affordable housing, which creates greater strength to bring about change.
5. Specific legislative initiatives for affordable rental housing and to increase public awareness.
6. Better, broader understanding of the connectivity between affordable housing and economic opportunity/success.
7. Better understanding by members of the Legislature
8. (a) Summary of obstacles and solutions; (b) legislative initiative that includes a capital initiative for affordable housing.
9. Understanding that fundamental to affordable housing is having livable wages.
10. 'Fact-based' information that is fundamental to reasoned discussion.
11. **Some** outcomes.
12. In Lewiston, there are people who work hard, but do not earn much money – need to establish a credit system for them.
13. Make it possible for workers to afford housing, especially retirees and people in the rural communities.
14. Increased awareness on the part of legislators
15. Expanding financing options.
16. This is a critical year for introduction of bills to address the 20 barriers to affordable housing identified in the list. This is the year we have to do it. The cost of land is the biggest problem. Need to regionalize both land use regulations and decisions being made around this issue.
17. Identify practical solutions.

B. Lessons learned/insights gained that should inform our work:

1. Should not do anything MMA doesn't like.
2. Be sensitive to home rule.
3. Be sensitive to the various economic areas throughout the state, & the increases or decreases in populations and incomes.
4. Mobile home park law passed in the late 80s was a moderate success. Need to replicate it to create Great American Neighborhood 'districts'
5. NIMBY is the fundamental problem.
6. Need to distinguish dreaming from reality in whatever we propose.

C. Information Needs:

1. Maine studies on the real fiscal impact of affordable housing, not the impact projected or imagined, including looking at the issue of a projected increase in school enrollment.
2. Financial impact to both town budgets for education and the state's education subsidies.
3. How many towns in Maine have growth caps, and/or moratoria? [MMA has that info]
4. What is the potential of the 'upstairs' of downtowns?
5. Smart code for adaptive use.
6. What would universal building code legislation look like?
7. Housing profiles – how much affordable housing is there – rental and owner? [Ask MSHA]
8. Factor in transportation costs and time spent commuting. [Hannaford will bring their data on this.]
9. Information/studies on the positive economic impact of affordable housing in a community.
10. Maryland impact study – Mike Finnegan will get for us.
11. Jackson labs report – Joyce will get for us.
12. Information on the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board.
13. Should not use studies to prove to towns that they will not experience an increase in education costs. Rather encourage towns to accept the fact that we need to support our children, who are our future. That's what each generation does for the next.

D. Strategies to Mitigate Barriers:

1. Create a Maine Low Income Housing Tax Credit, modeled after the New Hampshire Community Development Fund.
2. CDBG and Revenue Sharing Funds should have a 'prize pool' for towns that are high performers in the area of affordable housing.
3. First time home buyer condo plan → renter to owner conversion in mills and higher end financing by MSHA [needs clarifying].
4. Regarding local regulations: need state standards for building codes and regulations regarding accessory dwellings. That's simpler to achieve than regionalization.
5. Regarding security deposits: (a) employer assistance [Hannaford does]; (b) two-tiered method: pay for instance, only \$300 initially, then \$50/month thereafter, which would be more doable for people; (c) have credit unions and banks develop a separate loan program, using this two-tiered model; (d) talk with landlords about why the security deposits are so high since it seems just to motivate renters to leave without paying the rent for the last month because they assume the landlord can just keep the security deposit.
6. Exempt affordable housing from impact fees and growth caps.
7. Require that any town that wants to impose a growth cap will have to get permission to do so from the abutting communities. [Some felt that was dangerous because it would result in many more towns instituting growth caps.]
8. Create the concept of the Maine Village. The problem with the Great American Neighborhood proposal was that the state took too much control [MSHA oversight]. Instead model the Maine Village concept after the 1998 mobile park law. It should look more like that than the GAN. And instead of MSHA oversight, perhaps use regional planning commissions to provide oversight. Towns would have 2 years to develop affordable 'villages' in the towns. Jon Lockman and Linda Gifford volunteered to take this idea and 'build it out'.
9. Use of land banks – TDRs are authorized already, but there is no bank set up; some believe there are farmers in the state ready to sell. The state should coordinate it perhaps through the Land for Maine's Future Board. The idea would be to have dense housing and large land conservation. Models: Maine Community Trust [MDI]; Vermont Housing and Conservation Board. To make housing affordable, would have to include acquisition and infrastructure costs.
10. Regarding local regulations:
 - a. Target the carrots and sticks to the parts of the state that need affordable housing vs putting in legislation that would apply to the whole state since affordable housing is not a problem everywhere.
 - b. Revenue sharing – increase or decrease it – to motivate towns to pursue strategies for the development of affordable housing
 - c. Require that all new housing developments have 10% affordable housing
 - d. Municipal Infrastructure Trust Fund – give extra points to towns developing affordable housing.
 - e. Provide needed technical assistance to towns who are ready to develop affordable housing.
 - f. Exempt affordable housing from impact fees/growth caps.
 - g. Need a bond issue for a land acquisition revolving loan fund.
 - h. Reinstate the cuts in the state HOME fund, or create a new bond issue for the state HOME fund.
11. Utilize the new housing TIF to offset education costs associated with affordable housing. ¼ of the property would be residential.